

of white peace and fragrant purity, to be massed, not in snowy banks within Gothic walls before consecrated altars, but to be scattered from full hands on bare streets before dens of vice, in halls where men devise treason against society, in council chambers where premiers plot war! Come out of the church ye lilies, and ye priests, and ye people! Go to the drunkard, the nihilist, the harlot, the pauper, the millionaire, and tell them of him who died, who rose again, whose right it is to reign, and whose reign shall bring peace and bliss!

REBAPTISM.

A reader of the *Gospel Messenger* and a member of the German Baptist church, sends the following inquiry to the *Messenger*:

With us are two nice people, members of the Progressive church,—having been baptized by —. They believe in the ordinances the same as we do. Can they be received into the Brethren church with their baptism, or must they be rebaptized?

J. B.

To this the editor gives the following information:

If the minister, who took their confession and baptized them, was at that time a member of the Brethren church, they may be received upon their baptism, pledging themselves to conform to the rules of the church. If he was not a member at that time the ruling of the Annual Conference is, that they must be received by confession and baptism the same as others are received.

COMMENTS.

So far as our memory serves us, the editorial columns of the *EVANGELIST* have been remarkably free from all controversy with our German Baptist Brethren, and from any adverse criticism upon what they have said, done or written. After reading the above reply to the inquiry concerning rebaptism, we felt that loyalty to truth and justice to ourselves, demand of us one remark on the same.

First, we do not understand why the German Baptist Brethren persist in confounding our name with theirs. The continual use of our name by them in their church paper, tends to confuse the public and is an injustice to us. We should like to ask the *Messenger* a few plain questions: Is not the name of your church German Baptist or German Baptist Brethren? Is not this your *legal* name, adopted and authorized by Annual Conference? Is not your church property deeded in the

name of the German Baptist church? Why then continue the use of a name which does not belong to you but which *does* belong to us? The name *Brethren* was adopted by our people with full knowledge of the fact that *your* name was German Baptist, and that there was no other organization in the United States denominated *Brethren*, unqualified. It is our Conference name—adopted at a regular session of a National Conference. It is our *legal* name; we are incorporated as *Brethren*; our church property is deeded in the name of the *Brethren* church, and the name is ours and ours only. We have no inclination to impugn the motive of our German Baptist Brethren, but we confess that the continual, persistent use of our name by them, is a mystery to us, which we are compelled to ask them to explain. They certainly must know that we are an incorporated body; that our organization has the legal recognition of the government and courts of the United States. There is a *United Brethren* church; there is a *River Brethren* church; there is a *German Baptist Brethren* church, *but ours is the only Brethren church*, and the use of the name by another denomination, against better light and knowledge, is wilfully lending assistance in confusing the public mind, and doing us an injustice.

Second, in reference to rebaptism, we wish to say that it is the privilege of the German Baptist Brethren to demand rebaptism of members of our church, as a condition of admission into their church, but it is equally our privilege to show the unreasonableness of such a condition, and its utter want of any foundation in the word of God. In the first place, the position of our German Baptist Brethren, makes the efficacy of baptism depend more on the administrator than on the applicant, which is unscriptural. Let us see what they say. It is, in short, this: The validity of baptism depends on the membership of the administrator in the German Baptist church. Now there is not a hint in all the New Testament scriptures to warrant such a position. Faith, repentance and a true conception of the design and purpose of baptism, are the conditions, which if complied with, will bring the blessings that accompany obedience to the Gospel command in christian baptism. And this, whether a minister in the German Baptist church or one in the Brethren church administers the sacred rite.

It is well known that the Episcopal church makes Apostolic Succession one of its great and essential doctrines. Whatever virtue there may be in the rite of christian baptism, or in the confirmation service, according to their teaching, a bishop of their church alone can communicate it to another, because they claim an unbroken succession from the days of the apostles. Carry this doctrine a little farther and you land with the Roman Catholics who make church membership the one condition of salvation, almost independent of christian life and character. And the doctrine of the German Baptist Brethren, in reference to rebaptism carried to its logical conclusion, forces them to the same position.

Let us suppose that an earnest seeker after truth comes to a minister in the Brethren church who instructs him in the way of the Lord. The seeker is led to believe with all his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is truly penitent, and longs for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. He has learned from the minister that faith and repentance and baptism will bring the deliverance and place him in a new relation with his God. He believes, he repents, and the preacher administers the sacred rite of baptism, a triune immersion, according to the word, in the name of the Father etc. Question: Has God heard the humble penitent's prayer? Has he pardoned him as he promised he would on condition of faith, repentance and baptism? Or has God set at naught his own divinely appointed ordinance because another, than a German Baptist presumed to administer it? If God has heard the prayer, and honored his own appointed ordinance, then why demand a repetition of the same thing, on the same terms, and for the same purpose? If a penitent sinner receives baptism at the hands of a German Baptist minister who is bad at heart, (no reflections intended as all churches have such) does the baptism avail, is he baptized, is he pardoned, has God honored his ordinance administered by a hypocrite? If so, then, membership in the G. B. church is valued more highly than christian character and life in another organization. The conclusion is inevitable. Will the German Baptist Brethren please explain the relation between the administrator, and the ordinance of baptism and the applicant for baptism? Wherein and how does the one affect the other?